MARVEL

LIMITED SERIES

9 OF 9

HEINBERG • CHEUNG • MORALES • PONSOR

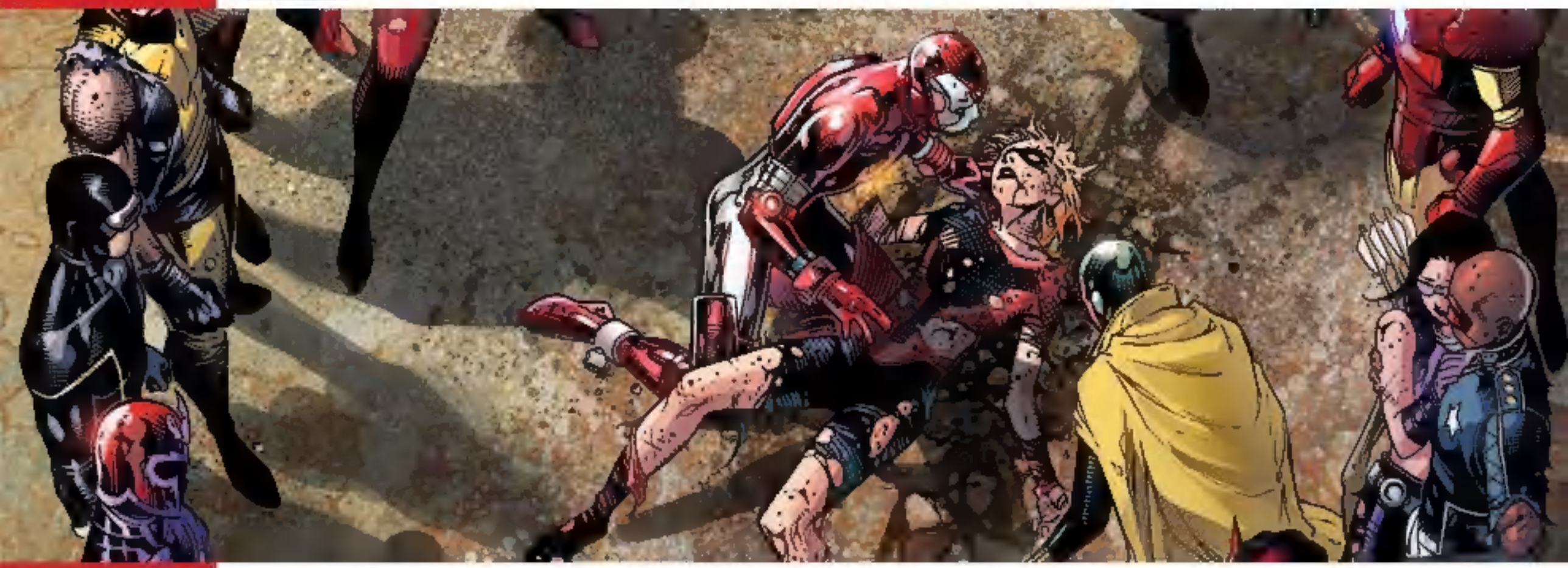
# AVENGERS

## THE CHILDREN'S CRUSADE

And there came a day, a day unlike any other, when Earth's Mightiest Heroes found themselves united against a common threat! On that day, the Avengers were born, to fight the foes no single super hero could withstand!

# AVENGERS

## THE CHILDREN'S CRUSADE



United by friendship and bravery, Wiccan, Hawkeye, Hulkling, Patriot, Speed, Stature, Iron Lad and the Vision are the Young Avengers, following in the footsteps of Earth's Mightiest Heroes!

When Wiccan loses control of his magic powers, the Avengers fear he has the potential to become another Scarlet Witch: the missing former Avenger who killed three of her teammates and committed what some consider a mutant genocide.

Believing the Scarlet Witch to be the key to Wiccan's future and his freedom, the Young Avengers make an uneasy alliance with her father, the mutant terrorist Magneto, and her brother, Quicksilver, to find and rehabilitate her.

The Avengers pursue the dysfunctional team to Latveria, where Wiccan – acting on his own – discovers that Wanda Maximoff, the former Scarlet Witch, has no powers, no memory of her past, and is about to marry the Latverian dictator, Doctor Doom.

Doom captures Wiccan, igniting an all-out war with the Avengers, the Young Avengers, Quicksilver, and Magneto.

The Young Avengers and Wanda escape and take refuge in the Timestream, where they revisit Wanda's past and, in doing so, manage to revive the Scarlet Witch's memory and her reality-altering powers.

Horrified by the sins of her past, the Scarlet Witch vows to reverse the spell she cast that resulted in M-Day, the depowering of all but a few hundred mutants. She begins by restoring the seismic energy powers of Rictor from X-Factor and is about to cast a spell on the entire mutant population when Patriot intervenes, allowing Doctor Doom to usurp and claim the Scarlet Witch's reality-altering power as his own.

In the climactic battle between an all-powerful Doom and the combined forces of the Avengers, the X-Men, X-Factor, and the Young Avengers, a giant-sized Stature bravely attacks Doctor Doom, saving the day, but sacrificing her life in the process.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HOW DID THIS HAPPEN?

WHEN DOOM ATTACKED YOU...

...CASSIE THOUGHT HE'D *KILLED* YOU.

SHE...

SHE BEAT THE HELL OUT OF HIM.

SHE SAVED US.

SHE SAVED *ALL* OF US.

IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE *ME*...

...NOT *HER*.

IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO *SAVE* HER.

WE CAN TAKE HER INTO THE TIMESTREAM RIGHT NOW--YOU AND I--AND FIND A DOCTOR IN THE FUTURE WHO CAN HELP HER.

WHAT--?

BUT WE HAVE TO GO NOW. THE LONGER WE WAIT--

IRON LAD...

...I APPRECIATE WHAT YOU'RE TRYING TO DO, BUT--

I CAN SAVE HER, CAPTAIN. I CAN BRING HER BACK. YOU JUST HAVE TO TRUST ME.

MR. LANG, I KNOW HOW PAINFUL THIS MUST BE FOR YOU, BUT IF YOU LET ME TAKE HER, I PROMISE I WILL DO EVERYTHING IN MY POWER TO--

YOU WILL DO NOTHING.

CASSIE IS GONE, IRON LAD. YOU MUST LEAVE HER IN PEACE...

...WITH HER FATHER.

YOU MEAN, I SHOULD LEAVE HER WITH YOU.

YOU ARE NOTHING!

NATHANIEL--

NOTHING BUT A MACHINE.

A MACHINE WITH MY BRAIN PATTERNS.

CALM YOURSELF, NATE.

IF CASSIE HAD ANY LOVE FOR YOU, VISION, IT WAS BECAUSE YOU WERE A CARBON COPY OF ME.

YOUR BEHAVIOR AT THIS MOMENT DISPROVES THAT THEORY.

YOU WOULDN'T EVEN EXIST IF I HADN'T PROGRAMMED YOU-- IF I HADN'T BUILT YOU--

I KNOW THAT.

THEN KNOW THIS...

...I CAN TAKE YOU APART JUST AS EASILY.

YOU KILLED HIM.

YOU KILLED THE VISION.

YOU CAN'T KILL SOMETHING THAT WAS NEVER ALIVE TO BEGIN WITH.

NATHANIEL, FIX HIM.

RIGHT NOW.

YOU FIX HIM IF YOU WANT.

I'M LEAVING.

AND I'M TAKING CASSIE WITH ME.

NO, SON. YOU'RE NOT.

I AM TRYING TO SAVE HER LIFE.

YOU'RE THE ONES WHO KILLED HER.

THE WAY YOU WENT AFTER THE SCARLET WITCH...

...THE WAY YOU WENT AFTER WICCAN...

NATHANIEL, YOU KNOW THAT'S NOT TRUE.

WHY ARE YOU DEFENDING THEM, BILLY?

THEY'RE TERRIFIED OF YOU. AND WHAT YOU CAN DO.

AND IF YOU THINK THEY'RE GOING TO LET YOU AND THE YOUNG AVENGERS EVEN EXIST AFTER THIS, YOU'RE DELUDING YOURSELF.

OUR ONLY HOPE FOR ANY KIND OF FUTURE IS IN THE TIMESTREAM.

WE CAN FIND CASSIE IN THE PAST AND MAKE SURE THIS NEVER HAPPENS TO HER.

NATHANIEL, DON'T YOU SEE?

THIS IS THE MOMENT.

IF YOU RUN AWAY TO THE PAST AND START CHANGING THE FUTURE...

...THIS IS THE MOMENT YOU BECOME KANG THE CONQUEROR.

YOU UNDERESTIMATE ME, BILLY.

I'M GOING TO BE BETTER THAN KANG THE CONQUEROR.

MUCH BETTER.

YOU'LL SEE.

SHOULD WE GO AFTER HIM?

CAN WE GO AFTER HIM?

IT ISN'T *HIM* YOU WANT...

...IT'S *ME.*

AND *ME.*

AND *ME.*

*I'M* AS MUCH TO BLAME AS WANDA IS.

I AM, TOO.

TOMMY--

WE'RE *ALL* AS MUCH TO BLAME AS WANDA IS.

WHICH IS TO SAY, NOT AT ALL.

*DOOM* IS TO BLAME FOR *ALL* OF THIS... M-DAY...CASSIE'S DEATH...

HE SAID SO HIMSELF. YOU ALL HEARD HIS CONFESSION.

A MAN IN LOVE'LL SAY *ANYTHING.*

THAT DIDN'T SOUND LIKE *LOVE* TO ME.

CYCLOPS...?

EVEN IN THE UNLIKELY EVENT THAT DOOM WAS TELLING THE *TRUTH*...

...AND THE SCARLET WITCH *WAS* POSSESSED BY A FORCE SHE COULDN'T CONTROL...

...IT DOESN'T CHANGE THE FACT THAT SHE DESTROYED LIVES.

AND FOR THAT THERE IS NO PUNISHMENT SEVERE ENOUGH.

BUT THE CHILDREN WERE RIGHT...

...THERE IS NO *JUSTICE* TO BE HAD.

EVEN HER DEATH WOULD ACCOMPLISH NOTHING.

BETTER SHE SHOULD SPEND WHAT'S LEFT OF HER LIFE TRYING TO MAKE UP FOR WHAT SHE'S DONE, KNOWING IT WILL *NEVER* BE ENOUGH.

KNOWING SHE WILL *NEVER* BE FORGIVEN.

KNOWING I WILL END HER LIFE *MYSELF* WHEN IT HAPPENS AGAIN.

BECAUSE IT *WILL* HAPPEN AGAIN.

HE'LL COME AROUND.

THEY *ALL* WILL.

ROGUE!

SEE YA.

YOU KNOW YOU HAVE A HOME WITH US HERE.

NO, CAP. NOT AFTER WHAT I'VE DONE.

WANDA... "ONCE AN AVENGER, *ALWAYS* AN AVENGER."

I THINK WE BOTH KNOW THAT'S NOT TRUE.

DON'T KID YOURSELF.

THE MINUTE THE AVENGERS FIND THEMSELVES IN A MAGIC WAR AGAINST *DORMAMMU* OR *MEPHISTO*, YOU'LL BE BACK ON THE TEAM.

HELL, THEY'LL PROBABLY PUT YOU IN CHARGE.

I'LL BE TOO BUSY, JAMIE...

...DOING EVERYTHING I CAN TO HELP THE PEOPLE WHOSE LIVES I DESTROYED.

YOU'D BETTER...

...OR SCOTT SUMMERS WON'T BE THE ONLY MUTANT WHO COMES GUNNING FOR YOU.

WANDA...

SIMON...

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO NOW?

I'VE NO IDEA.

MY ENTIRE ADULT LIFE, I'VE ONLY EVER BEEN AN *AVENGER.*

YOU'RE BETTER OFF *WITHOUT* THEM, BELIEVE ME.

THE AVENGERS USED TO BE A *FAMILY.* IT'S AN *ARMY.* AND ONE YOU DON'T WANT ANY PART OF.

WANDA...

I'LL LEAVE YOU TO *YOUR* FAMILY FOR NOW...

"...BUT KNOW I'M HERE FOR YOU NO MATTER WHAT."

COME, MY DEAR, YOU NEED REST.

WANDA'S COMING WITH *ME,* FATHER.

I THOUGHT PERHAPS WE MIGHT ALL GO SOMEWHERE *TOGETHER.*

EUROPE? THE SOUTH OF FRANCE?

YOU WANT TO GO ON *HOLIDAY?*

THANK YOU BOTH, BUT I NEED A LIFE OF MY *OWN* BEFORE I CAN TAKE A HOLIDAY FROM IT.

I'VE ONLY EVER BEEN PIETRO'S *TWIN_*

...MAGNETO'S *DAUGHTER...*

...THE VISION'S *WIFE.*

IT'S TIME FOR ME TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR *MYSELF_*

"...AND BE THERE FOR MY CHILDREN."

"SO, WHAT DO WE DO NOW?"

"WE REPAIR *THE VISION.*"

"HOW?"

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "HOW?" WE'VE GOT TIMED BACKUPS OF HIS HARD DRIVE.

YEAH, BUT [redacted] *BODY* WAS 30TH CENTURY TECH. THERE'S NO WAY TO REPLACE IT.

SO, WE'LL ASK TONY STARK TO BUILD US A *NEW* VISION--WITH THE OLD VISION'S MEMORIES.

THE *YOUNG*, OLD VISION. *OUR* OLD VISION.

I DON'T THINK TONY STARK'S GONNA BE [redacted] THE MOOD TO DO US ANY FAVORS FOR A WHILE.

SO, WE'LL HAVE TO DO SOMETHING AMAZING TO MAKE THE AVENGERS *FORGIVE* US, AND [redacted] WE CAN BRING THE VISION BACK TO LIFE.

EVEN IF WE COULD...

...I DON'T KNOW IF WE *SHOULD.*

WHAT?

KATE--

THINK ABOUT IT.

ALL HIS HARD DRIVE BACKUPS ARE FROM *BEFORE.*

WHAT ARE WE GONNA DO? BRING HIM BACK TO LIFE ONLY TO TELL HIM THAT CASSIE'S *DEAD?*

THAT WOULD JUST BE... CRUEL.

AND I CAN'T HELP HOPING...MAYBE HE AND CASSIE [redacted] TOGETHER RIGHT NOW...

...WHEREVER THEY ARE...

...AND THEY DESERVE TO REST IN PEACE.

SO, THEY'RE BOTH JUST... *GONE?*

AND WE JUST...

WE'RE JUST GONNA GO ON *WITHOUT* THEM?

NO.

*I'M* NOT, ANYWAY.

ELI--

WHAT!?

A *MILLION* MUTANTS WOULD HAVE GOTTEN THEIR POWERS BACK IF IT WEREN'T FOR ME.

THAT'S NOT TRUE. DOOM WAS NEVER GONNA LET WANDA RE-POWER THE MUTANTS.

ELI, YOU MADE A MISTAKE. EVERYBODY MAKES MISTAKES.

I'VE MADE TOO MANY.

AND I'M SEVENTEEN. I'M ONLY GONNA MAKE *MORE.*

BUT I SWEAR TO GOD, I WILL NEVER ALLOW MY MISTAKES TO HURT ANYONE ELSE. EVER AGAIN.

SO, I'M THROUGH BEING PATRIOT...

SO AM I.

BILLY--

THE AVENGERS [redacted] *RIGHT* ABOUT ME.

I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT I'M DOING...

...BUT I KNOW ENOUGH NOW TO *STOP* DOING IT.

I'M SORRY.

APOLOGY *NOT* ACCEPTED.

THIS IS A *WAR* WE'RE FIGHTING.

AND, YES, PEOPLE GET HURT.

PEOPLE *DIE*.

BUT YOU DON'T STOP *FIGHTING* OR THE BAD GUYS [redacted].

I DON'T KNOW [redacted] THE BAD GUYS [redacted] ANYMORE.

THE AVENGERS THOUGHT IT WAS *WANDA*.

I THOUGHT IT WAS THE *AVENGERS*.

ELI THOUGHT IT WAS *DOOM*.

BUT IT TURNED OUT TO BE *ME*.

*I'M* THE BAD GUY...

"...AND I HAVE NO BUSINESS CALLING MYSELF A *YOUNG AVENGER.*"

AND *YOU'RE* OKAY WITH THIS?

I... *UNDERSTAND* IT.

SO_THE YOUNG AVENGERS ARE JUST...

...YOU AND ME?

JUST *YOU.*

I AM NOT GOING OUT THERE AND DOING THIS ALL BY MYSELF.

YOU DON'T *HAVE* TO.

YOU COULD HAVE AN ACTUAL *LIFE* FOR A CHANGE--BE A PERSON--LEARN TO SLOW DOWN.

SOUNDS LIKE HELL.

YOU NEVER KNOW. YOU MIGHT ENJOY IT.

HAVE YOU *MET* ME?

YOU GUYS READY?

I GIVE THIS WHOLE RETIREMENT THING A *WEEK.*

TWO WEEKS AT THE *MOST.*

BETWEEN YOU AND ME_?

"_I HOPE YOU'RE RIGHT."

IT'S AN *EPIDEMIC.*

WE *HAVE* TO GET OUT THERE.

THEY'RE CALLING MANHATTAN "SPIDER-ISLAND."

EVEN IF WE WENT OUT THERE...

...HOW DO YOU FIGHT AN *EPIDEMIC?*

*THIS IS LIVE FOOTAGE NOW FROM THE NORTH KOREAN NEWS AGENCY OF WHAT APPEAR TO BE MILITARY MANEUVERS BEING CONDUCTED...*

SENTINELS...

BILLY_ SOMEONE'S DECLARING *WAR* ON THE X-MEN.

BILLY, LOOK...

...THE *HUMAN TORCH.*

...HE'S *ALIVE.*

BILLY, IT'S BEEN *MONTHS_*

...ENOUGH IS ENOUGH.

I'VE TRIED TO ■ PATIENT AND SUPPORTIVE...

...BUT YOU ■ TO *TALK* TO ME-- ■ TO WANDA--OR TO *SOMEONE*-- RIGHT NOW.

NO, I TAKE THAT BACK. YOU NEED TO TALK TO *ME*.

CLIK

I'M SORRY.

YOU SHOULD BE.

BECAUSE IF I'VE LEARNED NOTHING ELSE FROM ALL THIS...

...I KNOW NOW THAT LIFE IS WAY TOO SHORT ■ YOU TO BE SITTING HERE *WASTING* YOURS.

AND *MINE*.

ARE YOU BREAKING UP WITH ME?

AND GIVE YOU YET *ANOTHER* REASON TO SIT IN THE DARK DOING NOTHING?

SORRY, KAPLAN. YOU'RE STUCK WITH ME.

TILL DEATH DO US PART.

TEDDY ALTMAN...

...DID YOU JUST *PROPOSE* TO ME?

DEPENDS.

ARE YOU GONNA GET OFF YOUR ASS AND *DO* SOMETHING?

"IN THE BEGINNING, NOBODY KNEW WHAT TO MAKE OF US.

THE REASON YOU'RE [redacted] TONIGHT IS BECAUSE WE NEED YOUR *HELP*.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

QUITE A LOT, IT TURNS OUT.

"SEVEN SUPER-POWERED AVENGERS FANS--WHO CAME TOGETHER BECAUSE THE AVENGERS HAD FALLEN APART.

YOU FOUND THE SCARLET WITCH, [redacted] WE COULDN'T.

YOU STOPPED DOCTOR DOOM, WHEN WE COULDN'T.

YOU SOMEHOW MANAGED TO DEFUSE [redacted] CONFLICT WITH THE X-MEN--

FOR THE MOMENT.

"NOW THERE ARE *FOUR* OF US. AND *WE'VE* FALLEN APART.

SO, WE'VE ASKED YOU [redacted] TO LET YOU KNOW THAT FR[redacted] THIS DAY FORWARD...

"I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO US.

...WHETHER YOU'RE *YOUNG AVENGERS* OR NOT...

"BUT MAYBE *THAT'S* THE POINT.

...[redacted] OUR EYES, [redacted] ARE AND ALWAYS WILL [redacted]...

AVENGERS

"THAT THERE ARE [redacted] GUARANTEES.

"THERE ARE NO HAPPY ENDINGS.

"BUT YOU SHOW UP ANYWAY.

"YOU DON'T GIVE [redacted]. YOU ***NEVER*** GIVE UP.

"MAYBE *THAT'S* WHAT IT TAKES...

"...TO BE A *HERO.*"

THE END.

THE SCARLET WITCH'S STORY CONTINUES IN:

BRIAN MICHAEL BENDIS • JASON AARON • FRANK CHO

# ISSUE #0 PREVIEW

ALL RIGHT THEN...

LET'S TRY NOT TO HIT ANY *BUILDINGS* THIS TIME.

THIS HAS TO *STOP*, HOPE.

WHATEVER THE HELL THIS IS, IT HAS TO *STOP*.

FINE, OKAY, YOU CAN HAVE YOUR STUPID *JETPACK* BACK.

YOU KNOW THAT'S NOT WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT.

THOUGH YES, I *WOULD* LIKE MY JETPACK BACK.

YOU'VE BEEN SNEAKING OUT EVERY NIGHT FOR ALMOST A *WEEK* NOW. DID YOU *REALLY* THINK I WOULDN'T NOTICE?

I LET IT SLIDE AT FIRST, HOPING YOU'D COME TO YOUR SENSES.

I WASN'T DOING ANYTHING WRONG.

THEN WHY ARE YOU SNEAKING AROUND IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT?

BECAUSE I KNEW YOU'D ACT *EXACTLY* LIKE YOU'RE ACTING. ALL I DO IS FLY AROUND. THERE ARE TIMES I JUST NEED TO...TO *CLEAR* MY HEAD.

THAT'S *NOT* ALL YOU DO.

TWO MUGGERS WERE BEATEN HALF TO DEATH IN THE TENDERLOIN LAST NIGHT. THE NIGHT BEFORE THAT, A PAROLED CHILD MOLESTER IN CORONA HEIGHTS HAD HIS LEGS BROKEN. *TELL* ME YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THAT, OR THAT THERE'S NOT A *POLICE SCANNER* STRAPPED TO YOUR BELT.

PROTECTING A WORLD THAT HATES AND FEARS US. ISN'T THAT OUR JOB?

NOT WHEN IT MEANS NEEDLESSLY PUTTING YOURSELF IN DANGER.

AND HERE I THOUGHT THIS PLACE WAS CALLED UTOPIA. FUNNY NAME FOR A *PRISON.*

NOW YOU'RE JUST BEING *CHILDISH.* YOU'VE NEVER BEEN A PRISONER HERE, HOPE, YOU KNOW THAT. BUT YOU ALSO KNOW HOW *DANGEROUS* IT IS FOR YOU TO BE OUT THERE ON YOUR OWN. YOU'RE TOO BIG A *TARGET.*

YOU'RE TOO IMPORTANT TO EVERYONE HERE. MOST ESPECIALLY *ME.*

I CAN TAKE CARE OF MYSELF. I'M NOT THE DELICATE LITTLE FLOWER YOU SEEM TO THINK I AM.

NO. YOU'RE NOT.

YOU'RE THE MUTANT *MESSIAH.*

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO BROUGHT US BACK FROM THE BRINK OF EXTINCTION. YOU'RE THE ONE MUTANT IN ALL THE WORLD THAT WE CAN'T AFFORD TO LOSE.

BUT *WHY?*

HOPE...

NO, FOR ONCE, *TELL* ME THE WHY AND THE HOW. HOW AM I DIFFERENT FROM ANY OTHER MUTANT OUT HERE? ALL I'VE DONE MY WHOLE LIFE IS RUN FROM PEOPLE WHO WERE TRYING TO KILL ME. AND THEN I TURN AROUND AND SOMEONE TELLS ME HOW *AMAZING* I AM.

WHY? WHAT MAKES ME SO SPECIAL?

EVERYTHING.

THAT'S NOT AN ANSWER.

I WANT THE *TRUTH.* JUST TELL ME. PLEASE.

TELL ME ABOUT THE *PHOENIX.*

HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THE--

I KNOW MORE THAN YOU THINK I DO. I KNOW IT'S SOME BIG-TIME COSMIC FIREBIRD. AND I KNOW IT'S COMING FOR *ME.* JUST LIKE IT CAME YEARS AGO FOR YOUR WIFE, JEAN. I KNOW EVERYBODY GETS CRAZY SCARED WHENEVER IT'S EVEN MENTIONED. MOST ESPECIALLY *YOU.*

SO...

WOULD YOU LIKE TO TELL ME WHAT HAPPENS WHEN IT *GETS* HERE?

THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT.

HOPE, WAIT...

IF YOU WON'T TELL ME, I'LL FIND MY *OWN* ANSWERS.

*ALL UNITS, 10-30 IN PROGRESS AT THE ISOTOPE BANK AND TRUST, 326 FELL STREET...*

DON'T YOU EVEN THINK ABOUT IT.

DON'T YOU EVEN THINK ABOUT TRYING TO STOP ME.

HOPE, JUST LISTEN, PLEASE...

NO.

*YOU* LISTEN.